

Get Involved...

Everyone’s voice is valued in this process.

The CSEEA Draft Management Plan/EIS will be available for a 90 day public review and comment period in the spring of 2000.

During this time, you are invited to attend a public meeting hosted by the BLM to discuss the various management alternatives in the Draft Plan.

The upcoming public meeting date and location will be announced in the Draft Plan and on the Medford District web site at www.or.blm.gov/Medford.

We look forward to seeing you at the public meeting this spring.



Recent field tour held in the CSEEA

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Medford District Office
CSEEA
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Medford, Oregon 97504-4180

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Cascade Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area Planning Process Update

Dear Friend:

This brochure is an update on the planning process for the Cascade Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area (CSEEA) Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Plan). In the 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP), the CSEEA was established as a “Special Area Land Use Allocation” primarily due to its unique ecological and biological characteristics. The RMP indicated that a site-specific management plan for the CSEEA was needed to address issues unique to this area. The Plan, scheduled for completion in the fall of 2000, will provide long-term direction for management of the Area. In September 1999, the Ashland Resource Area of the Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requested comments on the preliminary issues and the identification of new issues for consideration during the planning process.

In September and October 1999, the BLM hosted four field tours and one public meeting to help identify significant issues. Since then, the BLM has analyzed almost 600 public comments and categorized issues with assistance from representatives of Southern Oregon University. This brochure summarizes those comments and issues.

The alternatives being developed for the CSEEA Draft Plan are based in part on the public input and involvement to date. The BLM will issue the Draft Plan in the spring of 2000. A 90-day public review and comment period will follow its release. During this time, the BLM will host a public meeting to discuss the various management alternatives in the Draft Plan.

You are currently on the CSEEA mailing list and are scheduled to get a copy of the CSEEA Draft Plan. The Plan will also be available on CD-ROM. If you would prefer a copy of the Plan on CD-ROM, or if you no longer wish to receive a copy of the plan and will instead review it on the Medford District web site at www.or.blm.gov/Medford, please fill out and return the card in this brochure.

If you have any questions about the information in this brochure or the CSEEA planning process, please call Tom Sensenig, Team Lead, at (541)618-2319, or e-mail: Tom_Sensenig@or.blm.gov.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this project. We look forward to seeing you at the public meeting this spring.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Drehobl
Ashland Field Manager

What You Told Us...

Summary of Key Issues and Public Comments

During the recent public comment period in the fall of 1999, 427 letters, cards and e-mails were received. An additional 153 comments were recorded at the public meeting, for a total of 583 responses. Letters were received from Ashland, Oregon (98), Medford, Oregon (29), Hornbrook, California (13), Talent, Oregon (13), Montague, California (11), and Portland, Oregon (11), as well as from a variety of other places, including Georgia, Kentucky, Ohio and Vermont.

Issues raised ranged from support for increased preservation and restoration of the natural landscape to concerns about potential increased restricted access to public land uses and resources and increased federal government control over public and private lands. Some letters supported a more middle-ground approach, and others simply requested more information without voicing an opinion about the project.

The key issues raised during the public comment period are summarized below and are listed in order of frequency. Representative excerpts from public comments are also included.

Livestock Grazing

Many respondents expressed concern over the potential adverse ecological effects of grazing on the area whereas others pointed out that grazing can be a management tool for preventing fires and enhancing wildlife habitat. They supported retaining grazing practices to maintain their livelihood and way of life.

“We are particularly concerned with the BLM’s apparent willingness to accept grazing as a ‘management tool’ in the CSEEA, especially in the Box -O area, where cattle may compete with the expanding elk herd which uses the area. There is a plethora of research which shows that grazing is harmful to many species, introduces noxious weeds and degrades riparian areas.”

“It is one of the few areas in southwestern Oregon where the underbrush is under control due to the grazing of cattle. This not only prevents future forest fires, but it also beautifies the forest making them more open and allowing better access through the area without the need for additional roads or trails.”

Roads and OHV Use

Many respondents identified CSEEA roads as important for recreational opportunities for motor-cycles and off-highway vehicles (OHVs), as well as for fire suppression. These respondents would like to see roads remain open with appropriate maintenance. On the other hand, CSEEA roads are viewed by others as increasing erosion and having a detrimental effect on land, water quality, wildlife and the human experience. These respondents recommend the decommissioning of all non-residential roads and jeep trails and restriction of OHV use. The Schoheim Road was referred to both as an example of a poorly maintained road, as well as a road that provides important access to the area.

“Last year some well meaning government officials in their attempt to protect this area closed off the last ten miles of a four wheel drive road on each end of the old three mile long trail where we used to fish and camp. Now with the only access by foot, horse or bicycle... our family can no longer enjoy our favorite spot. This is an area which to the best of my knowledge has not changed in character over the 40 plus years we have visited there.”

“Roads are perhaps the most serious threat to the ecological integrity of the CSEEA... Direct problems include erosion and alteration of hydrology, fragmentation of wildlife habitat, and spread of noxious weeds and wildlife species. Indirect problems include every way in which roads and jeep trails provide the means for destructive human activities to spread into the CSEEA.”

Timber Harvesting

Most respondents opposed commercial harvesting due to potential adverse ecological effects. Others cited the need for some level of logging, such as selective harvesting to provide jobs and reduce fire hazard.

Mining

Comments regarding mining revolved around the concern over potential environmental degradation from this activity in the Area.



Unique Ecological and Biological Diversity

A number of respondents mentioned the Area’s unique ecological character, citing the Area’s diversity and fragility, as well as its wildlife, native plants, insects, water quality and fish. Many expressed concern over the spread of noxious weeds and further degradation of fragile meadows. Jenny Creek and Horseshoe Ranch were frequently mentioned as important biological sites.

The Plan was also seen as a way to address fragmentation and to enhance connectivity by acquiring private holdings from willing landowners. Many respondents suggested that the size of the CSEEA planning boundary should be increased.

“The use of our public lands by private extractive industries may make a few people rich in the short term, but protection of irreplaceable treasures like the Soda Mountain area will make generation after generation rich in the long-term.”

“When I become old, infirm or handicapped and can no longer make it down to the bottom of Dutch Oven, I want to know there is still a wild, diverse, clear-streamed (with fish!) and big-treed canyon for my children and other adventurers to find a place to be their wild selves in.”

Fire

Throughout the comments, respondents raised the issue of fire suppression, including limited road access, and the ability to introduce fire and develop adequate fire planning.

“... an expanded use of prescribed fire could help restore natural processes, reduce the risks of catastrophic loss and meet the overarching ecological objectives of the CSEEA. These positive outcomes would, of course, be contingent on detailed planning, adequate budgetary support, and careful execution.”

Management of the Planning Area

Concerns about the BLM’s ability to adequately fund and manage activities in the Area were expressed. Some respondents pointed out that the success of law enforcement, scientific studies, reintroduction of fire, restoration and monitoring depends on appropriate funding and management.

Increased Regulations

Concerns about possible increased regulations were raised. Specifically, concerns about combining Oregon and California jurisdictions, regulating and “taking” of private property, loss of local autonomy and personal freedom, and a lack of respect for the way of life and livelihood of those who live in the area were mentioned.

“The reason this land is so diverse and in good condition is the good stewardship of the people who live here and make a living from the land.”

“As more and more land is termed wilderness--‘people stay out,’ we lose more and more of our privileges. What happened to “the land of the free?” If there is no control [management] of our beautiful lands, the bugs and forest fires will soon destroy it. Then what?”

Hiking and Non-motorized Recreation

Many respondents requested maintaining and increasing opportunities for hiking and other forms of non-motorized recreation. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail was recognized as an important recreation destination and respondents requested greater protection and expansion of the trail corridor and other related facilities and services (such as trailhead parking and interpretive information). Benefits cited from these activities included scenic and spiritual values as well as educational and economic opportunities. Some commented that enhanced trails could foster increased citizen management and monitoring. Others noted that an emphasis on hiking and non-motorized recreation could discriminate against the young, old and handicapped who require the use of motor vehicles to access the area.

INTEREST SURVEY

You are currently on the CSEEA mailing list and are scheduled to get a copy of the CSEEA Management Plan/EIS as requested.

However, since last September, we have developed additional options for reviewing the CSEEA Management Plan/EIS.

Please take a moment to look at the additional options for reviewing the CSEEA Management Plan/EIS.

Because we are trying to save paper and conserve resources, we would appreciate it if you would complete and return this card.

I would like to receive:

A paper copy of the Draft CSEEA Management Plan/EIS.

A copy of the Draft CSEEA Management Plan/EIS on CD-ROM.

No, I do not wish to receive a copy of the Draft CSEEA Management Plan/EIS, but please keep my name on your mailing list. I will review the Draft CSEEA Management Plan/EIS on the Medford District web site: www.or.blm.gov/Medford.

Please take my name off your mailing list. I no longer wish to receive information about the CSEEA Management Plan/EIS